

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

### FY 1999 ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

USDA published its first crop report in 1863, and further strengthened this responsibility in 1905 by creating the Crop Reporting Board (now the Agricultural Statistics Board). The mission of NASS is to serve the basic agricultural and rural data needs of the people of the United States, those working in agriculture, and those living in rural communities by objectively providing important, usable, and accurate statistical information and services needed to make informed decisions. These responsibilities were authorized under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1621-1627).

NASS is the primary statistical agency in the Department. Internally, its statistics are used across the Department and are provided to other agencies in their analyses of programs, policy development, etc., as well as, use in their annual performance measures. NASS's statistics also keep those involved with America's biggest industry well-informed, provide the basic information necessary to keep agricultural markets stable and efficient, and help maintain a "level playing field" for all users of agricultural statistics. NASS's program of current official estimates and the census of agriculture program is complemented by its statistical research and service program. This component works to improve statistical survey methods and to test advanced technology for timely and cost efficient production of high quality agricultural statistics. NASS is responsible for conducting the census of agriculture program that provides comprehensive information about the Nation's agriculture every 5 years. NASS's responsibility to conduct the census of agriculture is authorized under Public Law 105-113, the Census of Agriculture Act of 1997 (Title 7 U.S.C. 2204g).

More information regarding NASS's programs can be found in the REE and NASS Strategic and Annual Performance Plans.

Only federal employees were involved in the preparation of this report.

NASS PERFORMANCE GOAL SUMMARY			
Strategic Goal/ Management Initiative	FY 1999 Performance Goals	Performance	
		Target	Actual
Goal 1: Through research and education, empower the agricultural system with knowledge that will improve competitiveness in domestic production, processing and marketing.	Provide timely and impartial agricultural statistics for use by all market participants which promote an economically viable and competitive agricultural production system. Percent of NASS reports that are complete, meet scheduled release dates, and contain no data errors. Percent of total national agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program. Percent of data users who rate NASS data as important or essential to the orderly marketing of agricultural products. The NASS annual report release calendar is published and distributed prior to the start of each year.	99% 94% 90% yes	96% n/a n/a yes
Goal 2: Ensure an adequate food and fiber supply and promote food safety through improved detection, surveillance, prevention, and education.	Provide important data on pre- and post-harvest chemical applications for informed evaluations of risk potential associated with using or discontinuing chemicals relative to both food safety and food security. Number of fruit and vegetable growers and packing houses surveyed regarding agricultural practices related to food safety issues. Provide survey data showing percentage of U.S. farmland employing Integrated Pest Management practices.	n/a yes	n/a yes
Goal 3: Foster a healthy and well-nourished population having the knowledge, desire, and means to make health-promoting choices.	None for FY 1999. (The NASS program supports this goal through its reimbursable program, however there are no appropriated resources used for this goal.)	n/a	n/a

NASS PERFORMANCE GOAL SUMMARY			
Strategic Goal/ Management Initiative	FY 1999 Performance Goals	Performance	
		Target	Actual
Goal 4: Enhance the quality of the environment through a better understanding of and building on agriculture's and forestry's complex links with soil, water, air, and biotic resources.	Provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, production practices, land use, and Integrated Pest Management practices so proper decisions can be made regarding stewardship of America's rural resources and the environment. Number of commodities for which pesticide use data are collected.	43	43
Goal 5: Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address the economic and social problems facing our youth, families, and communities.	Provide detailed data from the census of agriculture at specified intervals to facilitate locality based policy and business decisions benefitting farmers, ranchers, and rural residents. Provide necessary and sufficient economic data on prices, labor, cost of production, farm numbers, and farm income to enable informed policy decisions to benefit farmers, ranchers, and rural residents. Number of months earlier than previous agricultural censuses for release of U.S. census data. Percent completeness improvement for coverage of minority operated farms compared to the previous agricultural census. Documented evidence that AELOS data are requested and used to make informed decisions by a wide cross-section of data users for analyzing changes in farm financial health, land ownership patterns and inputs contributed to agricultural production by landlords.	10 10% n/a	10 18% n/a
MI 1: Strive to meet customer needs and expectations.	Improve customer awareness, responsiveness, service, and communications within NASS to enhance the data products and services delivered to satisfy changing customer data needs and expectations. Percentage of data users who are satisfied or very satisfied with NASS service. Number of new data products and services introduced to fulfill customer requests.	90% 5	n/a 9
MI 2: Employ a diversified and technically competent staff and treat employees fairly and with respect.	Hire, train, and develop a highly qualified, diversified, and technically competent staff in an atmosphere of trust, teamwork, and in a healthy, comfortable, modern, and safe environment. All program needs are met and NASS meets Department guidelines regarding diversity in staff. Percentage of NASS employees reporting low or very low morale. Number of substantiated EEO complaints filed by NASS employees.	yes 20% 6	yes 24% 0
MI3: Ensure an effective information resource management system that maximizes productive capability and facilitates communication for employees.	Effectively manage an information resources management system that uses the latest technology to maximize productive capability and facilitate communication for efficient delivery of NASS services to the public. Number of report due dates missed due to equipment failure. Percentage of employees agreeing that the physical work environment is not an impediment to doing their job well.	0 85%	0 80%

**Goal 1:** Through research and education, empower the agricultural system with knowledge that will improve competitiveness in domestic production, processing and marketing.

**Objective 1.1:** Describe U.S. agriculture as fully as possible, providing timely and accurate agricultural statistics that are used throughout the agricultural sector to evaluate supplies and determine competitive prices for world marketing of U.S. commodities.

**Objective 1.2:** Promote a level playing field in production agriculture with impartial statistics available to all at a predetermined and publicized date and time.

### Key Performance Goal

Provide timely and impartial agricultural statistics for use by all market participants which promote an economically viable and competitive agricultural production system.

Percent of NASS reports that are complete, meet scheduled release dates, and contain no data errors.

**Target:** 99%

**Actual:** 96%

Percent of total national agricultural production included in the NASS annual statistics program.

**Target:** 94%

**Actual:** n/a *Data not available*

Percent of data users who rate NASS data as important or essential to the orderly marketing of agricultural products.

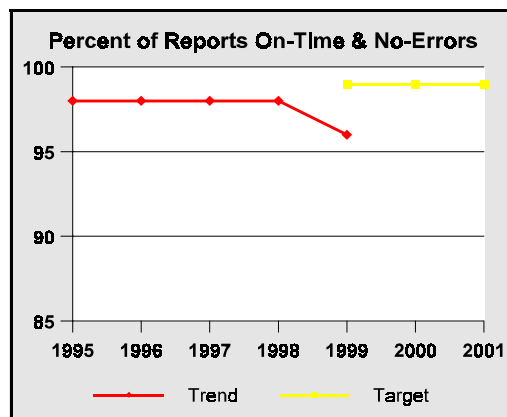
**Target:** 90%

**Actual:** n/a *Data not available*

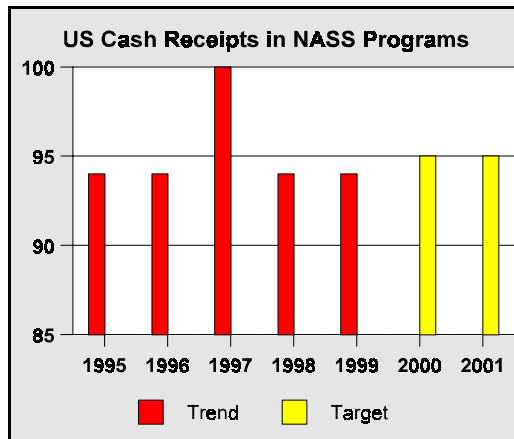
The NASS annual report release calendar is published and distributed prior to the start of each year.

**Target:** yes

**Actual:** yes



Year	Number of NASS Reports and Releases	Number of reports released on time without errors	Percent	Target
1995	344	337	98%	
1996	349	342	98%	
1997	333	325	98%	
1998	388	379	98%	
1999	386	370	96%	99%
2000				99%
2001				99%



Year	Estimated Total U.S. Cash Receipts (Mil. Dollars)	Total U.S. Cash Receipts in NASS Program (Mil. Dollars)	Percent	Target
1995	188,055	176,080	94%	
1996	199,138	186,287	94%	
1997	207,611	207,443	100%	
1998	196,761	184,485	94%	
1999	n/a	n/a	n/a	94%
2000				95%
2001				95%

**1999 Data:** The 1999 data provides information on the number of NASS reports and releases that were released to the public “on time” at a specified time and date as indicated in the NASS Agricultural Statistics Board Calendar during 1999. Errors in a report are corrected with the publication of an official errata notice. Cosmetic and non-data errors are documented and corrected; however an official errata is not published for those reports. Revisions to preliminary data series or forecasts are part of the Agency’s standard operating procedures and are not considered as errors. The percent of the number of reports released “on-time and no-errors” is calculated using the actual number of reports in this category with the total number of NASS reports. This information is closely monitored by the Agency and is reliable. The percent of “on-time and no-errors” reports was 3 percent below the 1999 target of 99 percent and slightly below previous years percentages.

The NASS Agricultural Statistics Board (ASB) Calendar is an annual publication that is published several months prior to the beginning of every calendar year and is made available to the public at that time. It contains all of the NASS National statistical reports that will be published and released from NASS Headquarters in Washington D. C. during the calendar year.

NASS program coverage is judged and calculated using Cash Receipts estimates published by the Economic Research Service (ERS). ERS data for 1999 are not available until July 2000. Cash receipts provides a standard unit for collapsing and comparing livestock and crop production. ERS uses available NASS data on production, sales, and prices received to estimate for the commodities in the NASS program. Commodities not covered by NASS are estimated using economic models or external data sources to achieve completeness.

As the chart and data indicates, NASS program coverage expands to 100 percent during census years (1997). The 1997 Census of Agriculture was the first census conducted by NASS. The census allows for open-ended reporting of all commodities produced, thus providing a vehicle for obtaining data on rarer items. Estimates of commodity coverage do not reflect numerous data series relating to economic, environmental, and demographic subjects. Based on historical data for 1999, NASS expects 94 percent of the total national production is covered by the NASS estimating program and anticipates this increasing to 95 percent in FY2000.

There were no customer service surveys conducted or data available to report data user ratings.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met its performance goal in providing timely and impartial agricultural statistics. The target level of the number of “on-time and no-errors” reports was not fully achieved but was within 3 percent of reaching the established target of 99 percent. The increase in the number of errors in 1999 was due in part to the additional workload and large 5-year publications that were prepared based on Census revisions and adjustments.

The final program coverage calculations are not available until late July 2000 and will be updated in the FY2000 Annual Performance Report. The target level for the annual program coverage calculations will never coincide with the APR reports and will always be a year behind.

The release of the ASB Calendar was completed and the performance measure was met.

Even though the performance measure for evaluating data users ratings was not achieved, the overall performance goal was attained. NASS reports promoted a level playing field in production agriculture with impartial statistics available to all at a predetermined and publicized date and time. Please note that several other performance indicators relating to customer service previously outlined in the Annual Performance Plans are being discontinued and consolidated into fewer performance indicators in an effort to streamline the number of measures reported. The discontinued performance indicators are identified in the appendix of this report.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** NASS continues its efforts to sustain a level a target level of 99 percent “on-time and error-free” reports through continuous staff training and use of computer technology. The NASS ASB calendar has been released for the calendar year 2000 and was made available to the public in the fall of 1999.

Late in FY 1999, data user meetings were held in Atlanta, Ga., on Sept. 15, 1999; Lansing, Mi., on Sept. 17, 1999 late in FY 1999. Data user meetings were held at the beginning of FY 2000 in Chicago, Il., Oct. 18-19, 1999. Data users attending these meetings will be included in the customer service survey so that this performance measure for this goal can be realized. Plans for conducting customer service surveys during the summer of 2000 (or sooner if possible) are underway. NASS anticipates continuing the data users meetings to obtain customer service issues and input.

**Program Evaluations:** A program evaluation was conducted and a review of its statistical program was completed in 1999 to ensure the NASS statistical program coverage of agricultural commodities was complete as well as making sure it meets the changing needs of data users. It had been 10 years since NASS has conducted a comprehensive Program Review. The results of this program evaluation will be published in FY 2000.

**Goal 2:** Ensure an adequate food and fiber supply and promote food safety through improved detection, surveillance, prevention, and education.

**Objective 2.1:** Provide meaningful statistical projections that enable the producers and the marketing channels to minimize economic risk and provide food security for consumers.

**Objective 2.2:** Provide important data on pre- and post- harvest chemical applications for informed evaluations of risk potential associated with using or discontinuing chemicals relative to both food safety and food security.

## Key Performance Goal

Provide important data on pre- and post-harvest chemical applications for informed evaluations of risk potential associated with using or discontinuing chemicals relative to both food safety and food security.

Number of fruit and vegetable growers and packing houses surveyed regarding agricultural practices related to food safety issues.

**Target:** n/a

**Actual:** n/a

Provide survey data showing percentage of U.S. farmland employing Integrated Pest Management practices.

**Target:** yes

**Actual:** yes

**1999 Data:** There is no public data available at this time on the growers and packing houses. Data from the 1999 Fruit and Vegetable Agricultural Practices pilot study were not released, but used for internal evaluation of questionnaire content and design.

NASS has conducted a Fall Area Survey since 1997 with a focus on measuring farmer participation in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. This action was initiated to assist in measurement of the USDA policy goal of "75 percent of the Nation's farmland" under an IPM program by the year 2000. Survey results were released in August 1999 for pest management practices collected on the 1998 Fall Area Survey. Survey data were based on a probability area frame with a sample of 6,840 segments or parcels of land. Results from the 1999 Fall Area Survey will be released on April 4th, 2000.

**Analysis of Results:** The performance goal was met and estimates of the percent of farms and/or acres using a specific practice (pest management or agricultural) are calculated using sample weights. The reliability of these calculated values are then reviewed prior to final estimates being published. Analyses of survey data for 1999 on growers and packing houses was done internally to evaluate the questionnaire content and design and is not available to the public at this time.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** Survey work is currently ongoing for the measurement of IPM practices with results to be published in May 2000. Survey preparations are underway for a January 2000 Agricultural Practices training school and the onset of survey field work in late January 2000. NASS is a member of USDA's IPM subcommittee which provides immediate feedback on related pest management programs. Development of the Agricultural Practices Study occurred with direct input of Food and Drug Administration officials, USDA representatives, and industry leaders.

NASS conducted the Fruit and Vegetable Agricultural Practices pilot study in 1999 in California and New York to prepare for a 14-State comprehensive survey effort in early 2000. This survey is designed to establish a baseline of agricultural practices related to the potential for microbial contamination of fresh fruits and vegetables. Plans are to continue to measure changes in this baseline on a biannual basis and conduct other surveys targeted toward specific food safety issues.

**Program Evaluations:** No program evaluations were completed in FY 1999.

**Goal 3:** Foster a healthy and well-nourished population having the knowledge, desire, and means to make health-promoting choices.

**Objective 3.1:** Provide statistical advice, consultation, and services to USDA and State agencies concerned with health, nutrition, and education when seeking new data or the statistical analysis of existing data for policy decisions.

While there is no specific performance goal or measure established for the objective, NASS provides technical assistance and guidance, as needed, to the REE mission area and other USDA policy officials in providing data and information needed to support this goal at the Departmental level. The NASS program also supports Goal 3 through its reimbursable program, however there were no appropriated resources associated with this goal in FY 1999. NASS does not plan on establishing a specific performance measures for this goal in the future. This goal is a component of the overall REE strategic plan.

**Goal 4:** Enhance the quality of the environment through a better understanding of and building on agriculture's and forestry's complex links with soil, water, air, and biotic resources.

**Objective 4.1:** Provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, production practices, land productivity and Integrated Pest Management practices so proper decisions can be made regarding stewardship of America's rural resources and the environment.

#### Key Performance Goal

Provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, production practices, land use, and Integrated Pest Management practices so proper decisions can be made regarding stewardship of America's rural resources and the environment.
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Number of commodities for which pesticide use data are collected.
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Target:	43
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Actual:	43
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**1999 Data:** The 1999 data was summarized in the following publications and were released in 1999 as a result of chemical use data collection efforts: Agricultural Chemical Usage - Field Crops Summary, Agricultural Chemical Usage - Vegetables, Agricultural Chemical Usage - Postharvest Applications, Agricultural Chemical Usage - Livestock and General Farm Summary. (Similar publications are planned for 2000.) Survey and estimation procedures and data reliability are described in detail in each of these publications and can be easily accessed through the Internet.

**Analysis of Results:** There were 43 commodities for which data were collected and the performance goal was met for this objective. Estimates of chemical use statistics (e.g. acres treated, application rates, etc.) are calculated using sample weights. The reliability of these calculated values are reviewed thoroughly prior to final estimates being published.

It is important to note that NASS has conducted chemical use surveys since 1990 in an effort to assist the Department in addressing concerns expressed in Presidential initiatives over the safety of chemical use on the Nation's food crops. Over the past ten years, as concern over food safety has been joined by interest in pesticide issues related to worker exposure and water quality, NASS has made every effort to increase program coverage to address known data gaps. Even with no increase in the base budget allocated to pesticide surveys from 1997 to 1999, coverage of commodities has increased steadily as knowledge of environmental issues has increased and survey efficiencies have been realized.

Program comments were solicited from a primary data user, the Environmental Protection Agency, as a part of the overall NASS program review conducted in 1999. In addition, staff are constantly meeting

with industry stakeholders, the Office of Pest Management Policy in USDA, other USDA agencies, State governments, universities, and numerous private organizations on issues related to pesticide use data.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** In addition to the publication of four releases containing commodity chemical use statistics, data collection has been completed for postharvest chemical applications to soybeans and oats and is currently underway for fruit and nut crops and several major field crops. The number of commodities covered will be increasing each year as targeted in the Annual Performance Plan.

**Program Evaluation:** No program evaluation was done in FY 1999.

**Goal 5:** Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address the economic and social problems facing our youth, families, and communities.

**Objective 5.1:** Provide detailed data from the census of agriculture at specified intervals to facilitate locality based policy and business decisions benefitting farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.

**Objective 5.2:** Provide necessary and sufficient economic data on prices, labor, cost of production, farm numbers, and farm income to enable informed policy decisions to benefit farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.

#### Key Performance Goal

Provide detailed data from the census of agriculture at specified intervals to facilitate locality based policy and business decisions benefitting farmers, ranchers, and rural residents. Provide necessary and sufficient economic data on prices, labor, cost of production, farm numbers, and farm income to enable informed policy decisions to benefit farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.

Number of months earlier than previous agricultural censuses for release of U.S. census data.

**Target:** 10

**Actual:** 10

Percent completeness improvement for coverage of minority operated farms compared to the previous agricultural census.

**Target:** 10%

**Actual:** 18%

Documented evidence that AELOS data are requested and used to make informed decisions by a wide cross-section of data users for analyzing changes in farm financial health, land ownership patterns and inputs contributed to agricultural production by landlords.

**Target:** n/a

**Actual:** n/a

**1999 Data:** The major publication series for the Census of Agriculture is the Volume 1 Geographic Area Series. The 1997 Census of Agriculture was released February 1, 1999. The previous census of agriculture (1992) was released December 14, 1994. The comparison of release dates was used to calculate the number of months for the aforementioned performance measure.

In 1997, the coverage error to measure the completeness of the Census of Agriculture was measured by the Not on Mail List Survey as well as the Classification Error Survey. Previously, the coverage error on minority farms in 1992 was only measured by the Not on Mail List Survey. The coverage of minority farms included a comparison of the number of minority farms missed in 1997 vs. 1992. The percent of



minority farms missed declined by 8.9 percent and the percentage coverage increased by 2.8 percent, even though the Census numbers showed an overall decrease in the total number of farms from 1,925,300 in 1992 to 1,911,859 in 1997.

There is no information available for AELOS during FY 1999 since the data will not be released until 2001.

**Analysis of Results:** This performance goal was fully attained by NASS which provided complete and detailed data from the census of agriculture to facilitate locality based policy and business decisions benefitting farmers, ranchers, and rural residents. Under the leadership NASS, the release was about 10 months earlier. It should be noted that under NASS all Volume 1 Geographic Area Series publications were available at the same time. Previous census releases were released on a “flow basis” over an extended period of time. Data users were able to access information from the 1997 Census of Agriculture via the Internet (or hard-copy) 10 months earlier than previous Census’s of Agriculture prepared by the Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce.

The performance goal exceeded for this objective with the percent completeness improvement increasing by 18 percent, 8 percent above the target. When the last Census of Agriculture was taken in 1992, it was determined that the number of farms and ranches operated by women and minorities were undercounted at a higher rate than other farms and ranches who reported in the Census. The total census number of minority farms for 1997 was 47,658 farms plus the coverage total of 13,184 farms, combined totaled 60,842 minority farms (or 78.3 percent coverage). This compares to the 1992 census total of minority farms of 40,318 farms with 12,586 coverage total, for a combined total of 52, 904 (or 76.2% coverage) minority farms. This accounts for the 18 percent increase in the number of minority farms in 1997 from 1992 without the coverage error adjustment.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** There has been no additional activity in these areas in FY 2000 to report to date.

**Program Evaluations:** No evaluations were completed in FY 1999.

**Management Initiative 1:** Strive to meet customer needs and expectations.

(Note that objectives 1.1-1.4 will be included in the means and strategies of the 2000-2001 Annual Performance Plan and will be eliminated from the FY 2000 Annual Performance Report).

**Objective 1.1:** Meet the requirements of the September 1993 Executive Order 12862, Setting Customer Service Standards.

**Objective 1.2:** Introduce new products and services, redesign existing products, and enhance NASS publications and electronic products, including generating new spatial products, to be responsive to changing customer data needs and expectations.

**Objective 1.3:** Improve customer awareness concerning NASS products, services, and facilitate easy access to official NASS data.

**Objective 1.4:** Investigate new ways to continue dialogue between NASS and data users.

## Key Performance Goal

Improve customer awareness, responsiveness, service, and communications within NASS to enhance the data products and services delivered to satisfy changing customer data needs and expectations.

Percentage of data users who are satisfied or very satisfied with NASS service.

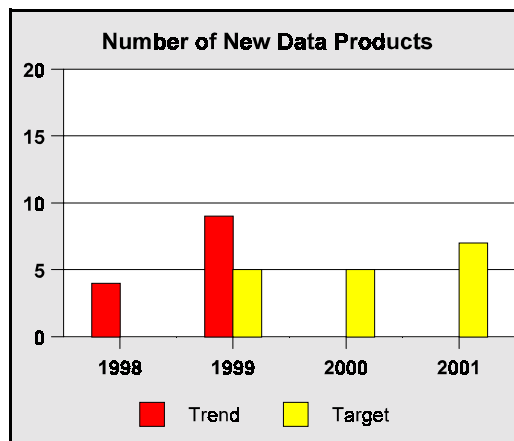
**Target:** 90%

**Actual:** n/a

Number of new data products and services introduced to fulfill customer requests.

**Target:** 5

**Actual:** 9



Year	Number of New Data Products	Target
1998	4	
1999	9	5
2000		5
2001		7

**1999 Data:** During 1999, NASS introduced 9 new products to address additional data needs in addition to the approximately 400 National reports released during the year. The nine new products included (1) Year 2000 Computerized Systems Readiness Report, released February 1999; (2) Agricultural Chemical Usage - Postharvest Applications - Corn and Wheat, released March 1999; (3) Agricultural Chemical Usage - 1997 Livestock and General Farm Summary, released April 1999; (4) Farm Computer Usage and Ownership - Update, released July 30, 1999; (5) 1998 Childhood Agricultural Injuries, released October 1999; and (6) Ranking of Congressional Districts Report, released early fall 1999; (7) Understanding USDA Crop Forecasts, released March 1999; (8) Equine Report, released March 1999; (9) Fruit Wildlife Damage Released May 1999.

There were no customer service surveys conducted or data available to report data user ratings for the NASS service performance measure.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS met this performance goal during FY 1999 to improve customer awareness, responsiveness, service, and communications within NASS to enhance the data products and services delivered to satisfy changing customer data needs and expectations. NASS anticipated releasing 5 new releases during 1999, but released 4 additional reports totaling 9 new data products for the year.

NASS introduced nine new products to address additional data needs requested by data users. The Year 2000 Computerized Systems Readiness Report data was provided to determine how many farmers had heard of the Y2K problem, where some computerized systems may fail because of the two digits used to represent the year and how this could impact automated farm systems. The Agricultural Chemical Usage - Postharvest Applications - Corn and Wheat results refer to pesticide applications made at the grain storage facility after the crops were harvested. On-farm applications were beyond the scope of this survey. The time frame for these applications were September 1, 1997 to August 31, 1998 for corn and June 1, 1997 to May 31, 1998 for wheat, which correspond to the marketing year. Agricultural Chemical Usage - 1997 Livestock and General Farm Summary. This report provides

pesticide use information on segments of agriculture not previously collected by NASS. The data in this report, along with the regular pesticide use program, focused on crop-specific items, will enable a more comprehensive look at the total amounts of pesticides used in the U.S. Farm Computer Usage and Ownership - Update. A one-time release was published in 1997 and again this year, to ask the farm operator about access and use of computers. Not a separate survey; questions were added to an on-going survey program. 1998 Childhood Agricultural Injuries. NIOSH, an Agency of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, sponsored this survey to better understand the magnitude and scope of childhood agricultural injuries. The survey was conducted as part of the NIOSH Childhood Agricultural Injury Prevention Initiative. Ranking of Congressional Districts Report. The census of agriculture asked farm operators to report the principal State and county of agricultural activity for the farm operation, but not the congressional district. For this report, farms were assigned to congressional districts according to the reported State and county of agricultural activity.

Understanding USDA Crop Forecasts report describes the statistical methods which provide the benchmark against which all other data sources are compared. This report will answer many questions that often arise about how the estimates of production, supply and demand are generated. The Equine Report is the first NASS publication of U.S. equine statistics. The report contains total equine inventory for 1998, equine sold, and value of sales. The Fruit Wildlife Damage Report reveals the dollars or percent of U.S. production of apples, blueberries, and grapes lost to wildlife damage and expenditures on wildlife damage prevention. The survey was conducted in California, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington. The survey was funded by USDA, APHIS, Wildlife Services.

New developments in computer, communication, and related technologies have made it possible to transmit information almost anywhere in the world in a variety of data formats, including image, voice, and video. NASS is heavily involved in the creation, adaptation and use of new technologies. Statisticians can share and analyze research information and publish and disseminate their results via the Internet. Similarly, students, farmers, processors, consumers, and companies searching for statistical, economic, research, and education information use the Internet.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** With the October 1999 reorganization, NASS established a new unit, the Marketing and Information Services Office. They are expected to provide publicity materials, public relations materials, disseminate statistics, operate the Publications Office and Agricultural Statistics Information Line, administer the Homepage ([www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/)), support public relations activities of HQ and State Statistical Offices (SSO's), develop new publication products, coordinate relations with the media, and support the Agricultural Statistics Board. Information about NASS products, procedures, and services will be provided to customers and stakeholders and the Agency will continually strive to improve customer access to its information, as well as introducing new products and services and redesigning existing products to meet the ever-changing customer expectations. The new Marketing and Information Services Office will play a key role in the facilitating the development and deployment of new products for NASS data users for FY 2000 and in achieving targets.

NASS has a Customer Service Plan that is readily available to the public via the Internet at the NASS Homepage URL at [www.usda.gov/nass/](http://www.usda.gov/nass/). NASS Customer Service contacts can be reached at the Agricultural Statistics Information Line at 1-800-727-9540 or by e-mail: [nass@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass@nass.usda.gov). The NASSfax (autofax) is at 202-720-2000. The plan includes: NASS' pledge to its customers; service that customers can expect to receive; Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's); and a listing of customer service contacts. Training has been provided to employees in the Headquarter's offices who work directly with NASS customers.

Late in FY 1999, data user meetings were held in Atlanta, Ga., on Sept. 15, 1999; Lansing, Mi., on Sept. 17, 1999 late in FY 1999. Data user meetings were held at the beginning of FY 2000 in Chicago, Il., Oct. 18-19, 1999. Data users attending these meetings will be included in the customer service survey so that this performance measure for this goal can be realized.

**Program Evaluations:** No evaluations were completed in FY99.

**Management Initiative 2:** Employ a diversified and technically competent staff and treat employees fairly and with respect.

(Note that objectives 2.1-2.7 will be included in the means and strategies of the 2000-2001 Annual Performance Plan and will be eliminated from the FY 2000 Annual Performance Report).

**Objective 2.1:** Support cooperative programs with 1890 land-grant, Hispanic, American Indian, and other minority educational institutions to assist them in training and to help NASS recruit qualified minorities.

**Objective 2.2:** Promote trust, recognition, and communication in a team atmosphere. Involve the staff at all levels in program decisions.

**Objective 2.3:** Utilize and promote student assistants, cooperative students, stay-in-school and other employment programs that assist in recruitment of highly qualified, diversified, and technically competent staff.

**Objective 2.4:** Maintain a healthy and safe environment for employees, with modern equipment and comfortable furnishings. Make effective use of flexible work schedules and work locations.

**Objective 2.5:** Develop innovative and flexible training programs to meet individual needs. Offer and encourage statistics, computer, and communication skills training. Promote staff knowledge in the full range of agricultural and rural issues. Build experiences and versatility through staff mobility.

**Objective 2.6:** Conduct an organizational climate survey at regular intervals and take actions on issues identified.

**Objective 2.7:** Participate in national and international forums where concepts and methodologies are presented. Utilize cooperative agreements, exchange programs, contracts, and other interactive vehicles with academic, professional, and subject matter experts to expand staff capabilities.

### Key Performance Goal

Hire, train, and develop a highly qualified, diversified, and technically competent staff in an atmosphere of trust, teamwork, and in a healthy, comfortable, modern, and safe environment.

All program needs are met and NASS meets Department guidelines regarding diversity in staff.

**Target:** yes

**Actual:** yes

Percentage of NASS employees reporting low or very low morale.

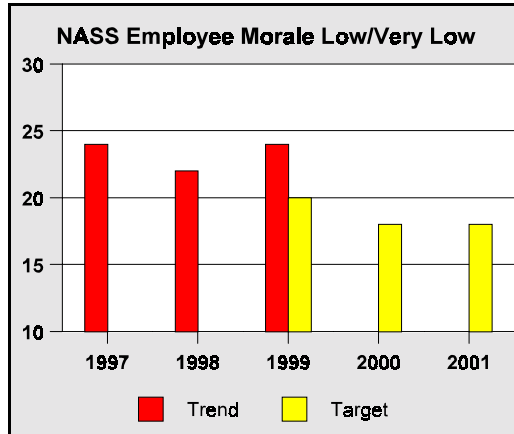
**Target:** 20%

**Actual:** 24%

Number of substantiated EEO complaints filed by NASS employees.

**Target:** 6

**Actual:** 0



Year	NASS Employees with Low or Very Low Morale	Target Percent
1997	24%	
1998	22%	
1999	24%	20%
2000		18%
2001		18%

Year	Total Number of Complaints & Grievances Filed	Actual Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints Filed	Target Number of Substantiated EEO Complaints Filed
1995	2	0	
1996	3	0	
1997	5	0	
1998	10	0	
1999	6	0	6
2000			0
2001			0

**1999 Data:** Survey results for evaluating employee morale were generated from the February-March 1999 NASS Organizational Survey conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland – College Park. There 1,063 reports returned. The survey response rate was 78 percent of all NASS employees which includes some State employees who work in NASS field office locations.

The results and detailed analysis of the 1999 NASS Organizational Climate Surveys are published and distributed to all NASS employees and are available upon request. The NASS Organizational Climate Surveys are typically done every 2-3 years. Previous climate surveys were done in 1988, 1994, and 1997. It should be noted that the 1998 data charted in the graph was a target in the Annual Performance Plan.

Employment and agency diversity information for FY 1999 was obtained from the NFC. As of June 1999, the NASS permanent full-time part-time employees combined reached a total of 1,107, with a breakdown of 541 men and 566 women. During the past several years, NASS has been addressing any existing under representation within the Agency for the following four most populous occupation series (those having 50 or more employees): GS-1530, Agricultural Statistician; GS-1529, Mathematical Statistician; GS-334, computer Specialist; and GS-1531, Statistical Assistant. All personnel actions (hires, promotions, reassignments, resignations, etc.) impacting the workforce's diversity within these four series are tracked since these occupational series make up approximately 78 percent of the Agency's total workforce.

The actual number of substantiated EEO complaints filed is determined based on complaints and grievances that are reviewed and approved to proceed under the Departmental EEO complaint process. There were a total of 6 complaints in FY 1999 but none were approved to proceed under the Departmental EEO complaint process.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS fully met this performance goal, however, the performance measurement for

rating employee morale was 4 percent above the targeted 20 percent. Although topic scores declined for NASS employees between 1999 and 1997, they remain far above the 1997 scores for other Federal statistical agencies. Employee morale in NASS is virtually unchanged from the 1997 survey. The survey contained seven questions on workforce diversity. Minority employees' responses to these questions improved since the 1997 survey while white employees approval remained constant. The NASS Administrator appointed an employee committee to study the survey results and make specific recommendations to NASS senior managers on areas identified as needing improvement.

In evaluating the employment diversity in NASS, employment-related statistics under the Professional, Administrative, Technical, Clerical and other (PATCO) categories were used. NASS had 579 employees (430 men and 149 women) in the Professional category; 128 employees (62 men and 66 women) in the Administrative category; 187 employees (22 men and 165 women) in the Technical category; 171 employees (8 men and 163 women) in the Clerical category; and 42 employee (19 men and 23 women) in the Other category. Of the total 1,107 employees included under the PATCO breakdown for NASS, there were 423 white women (38.2%), 160 Black men and women combined (14.5%), 33 Hispanic men and women combined (3.0%), 18 Asian American men and women combined (1.6%), and 7 American Indian men and women combined (0.6%). Thus, there were 641 minorities and women within NASS's workforce, representing 57.9 percent of the total workforce with a total increase of 1.1 percent since June 1998. The average grade is GS-9.9, while the supervisory ratio is 1 supervisor for every 7 employees. As of September 1999, 10 percent of the NASS workforce is eligible for retirement and over the next five years, 21 percent of the workforce will be retirement eligible.

In FY 1999, NASS hired 40 Student Assistants, nationwide, including Washington D. C. Headquarters offices, to work with statisticians and computer specialists in Headquarters and the State Statistical Offices. Thirty women and minorities represented 75 percent of the students hired, while minorities comprised 33 percent of the total.

In FY 1999, based on existing cooperative agreements and a signed Memorandum of Understanding, NASS provided financial resources to the Indian Resources Development Program at New Mexico State University at Las Cruces, and Southern University at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in support of the Beginning Agricultural Youth Opportunity Unit Program. Also, NASS has signed a Student Educational Employment Program Agreement with the University of Puerto Rico (Mayaguez Campus), and in FY 1999 the Agency is financially supporting four USDA/1890 National Scholars Program participants.

NASS emphasizes that employees are treated fairly, with respect, and as special participants in an important mission. NASS has provided every employee training in human relations, civil rights, workforce diversity, sexual harassment issues and will continue to do so on a regular basis, as needed. In FY 1999, NASS trained its entire workforce in "Sexual Harassment Prevention." NASS promotes trust, teamwork, and communication, involves the staff at all levels in program decisions, and recognizes outstanding contributions by employees. NASS has never had an EEO complaint with a decision of finding discrimination in its processes or practices. Targets for FY 2000 and FY 2001 for substantiated EEO complaints were updated to reflect "no complaints" as a desired Agency performance target for each year.

NASS promotes quality of work life by maintaining an office and work environment that employees are proud to tell others about. NASS strives to maintain offices with modern equipment and furnishings and a healthy and supportive environment for employees. NASS is supportive of the flexibilities afforded under the family-friendly leave programs and employees participate in the leave-transfer program, flextime, flexible work locations, and other programs that meet the needs of both the Agency and the employees. In FY 1999, NASS implemented a transportation subsidy program which provides a maximum of \$65.00 for each authorized employee who uses public transportation or a car pool to travel back and forth to work.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** To make improvements in the organization, such as employee morale, an internal Organizational Climate Survey Evaluation Team was chartered by NASS management to analyze the results of the 1999 Organizational Climate survey and make comparisons, if possible, and assess the Agency's goals and priorities, and made recommendations to NASS Senior Management in FY 2000. The Team is also articulating the NASS Core Value System and providing recommendations consistent with those values that will be important to everyone in making NASS a great place to work. NASS is planning to continue using the internship programs in FY 2000 as its primary program for hiring and recruiting a diverse workforce.

NASS requires employees use Individual Development Plans (IDP's) to reflect their career goals within the Agency's career paths and develop innovative and flexible training programs to meet individual needs. NASS pays training costs for employees who wish to develop their skills and build experience and versatility through staff mobility. NASS strengthens the technical, managerial, and leadership capabilities of employees by creating a cadre of needed specialists with a series of technical career tracks, aligning training and job opportunities with employees' technical and managerial career goals, developing training programs to align with changing program needs, and striving to employ a diversified and technically competent staff. NASS is planning to conduct civil rights training in coordination with USDA on-going efforts along with normally scheduled supervisory and management training in FY 2000.

Effective with the October 1999 reorganization, NASS has consolidated all training into one Training and Career Development unit to ensure that training goals, strategies, knowledge, and resources are shared. This group is placed high in the organization to facilitate cross-Agency service. NASS was recognized by the USDA Graduate School with the W. Edwards Deming Training Achievement Award for its training accomplishments in December 1999.

NASS Headquarters and field office staffs attended and participated in numerous state and national industry and commodity associations meetings and conferences throughout FY 2000. NASS will continue to make extensive use of cooperative agreements with the State Departments of Agriculture nationwide and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) in supporting the NASS statistical programs, at both the local and national levels. NASS continues its technical consulting efforts within the Department and other government agencies, as well as, internationally with several Central America and Eastern European countries and China.

**Program Evaluations:** There were no program evaluations done in FY 1999.

**Management Initiative 3:** Ensure an effective information resource management system that maximizes productive capability and facilitates communication for employees.

(Note that objectives 3.1-3.8 will be included in the means and strategies of the 2000-2001 Annual Performance Plan and will be eliminated from the FY 2000 Annual Performance Report).

**Objective 3.1:** Move to client/server computing using relational database technology.

**Objective 3.2:** Increase use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, and geo-referencing devices.

**Objective 3.3:** Use the USDA wide-area communications network to implement new functions such as remote LAN management, video-conferencing, document archiving and retrieval systems, GIS, and data sharing.

**Objective 3.4:** Organize all relevant data into a series of data warehouses which can be accessed and shared through powerful analysis tools. When appropriate, these data sets should contribute key components to the USDA architecture.

**Objective 3.5:** Upgrade all field LAN servers to enhance the system capability to handle over 300,000 computer assisted telephone interviews.

**Objective 3.6:** Upgrade all LAN systems to 32-bit architecture to facilitate the migration to the USDA Technical Architecture.

**Objective 3.7:** Work closely with the Administrative and Financial Management unit of the Agricultural Research Service to ensure administrative and financial services to NASS are delivered in an efficient, effective, and consistent manner consistent with Departmental standards and guidance.

**Objective 3.8:** Continue to meet USDA and OMB Y2K compliance milestones for system renovations. NASS has all mission critical systems in compliance according to OMB guidance, with the exception of census of agriculture processing systems which will not be in use until 2002 when the next 5-year census is conducted.

### Key Performance Goal

Effectively manage an information resources management system that uses the latest technology to maximize productive capability and facilitate communication for efficient delivery of NASS services to the public.

Number of report due dates missed due to equipment failure.

**Target:** 0

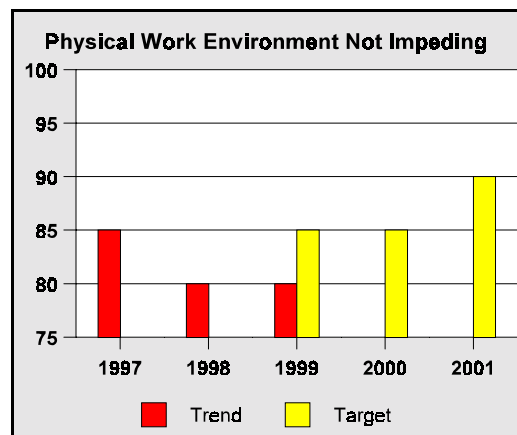
**Actual:** 0

Percentage of employees strongly agreeing or agreeing that the physical work environment is not an impediment to doing their job well.

**Target:** 85%

**Actual:** 80%

Year	Number of NASS Reports and Releases	Due Dates Missed Due to Equipment Failures	Target
1998	388	1	
1999	386	0	0
2000			0
2001			0



Year	Employees Agreeing that Physical Work not Impeding Them	Target
1997	85%	
1998	80%	
1999	80%	85%
2000		85%
2001		90%

**1999 Data:** There were no reports that were delayed or not released due to NASS computer or equipment failure.



Survey results for evaluating the physical work environment of NASS employees were generated from the February-March 1999 NASS Organizational Survey conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Maryland – College Park. There 1,063 reports returned. The survey response rate was 78 percent of all NASS employees.

**Analysis of Results:** NASS performance goal was met, however, the performance measurement indicator for the employee's physical work environment was 5 percent below the targeted 85%. The results and detailed analysis of the 1999 NASS Organizational Climate Surveys are published and distributed to all NASS employees and are available upon request.

Also contributing to the effective use of the NASS information management systems was the use of remotely sensed data for end of season crop acreage estimation and as a public crop geographic information systems data layer was expanded from Arkansas and North Dakota by adding the states of Illinois, Mississippi and New Mexico. The expansion was made possible by forming formal partnerships. A data sharing partnership with the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Farm Service Agencies enabled the program expansion as well as staffing partnerships with the state governments of Illinois, Mississippi and New Mexico and also with the State Conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in New Mexico. By partnering, the new crop geographic information systems data layer will be provided to the public that would not have been able to be produced by any single one of these organizations independently. In addition, NASS constructed new area sampling frames for the states of Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Remotely sensed data and GIS are used to build these new sampling frames. The new frames will be a statistical basis for improved statistical precision for a number of the agricultural statistics for those states.

The remotely sensed data, primarily from the two Landsat satellites, is procured in a georeferenced format. NASS also did a small pilot experiment using a global positioning systems receiver integrated with a laptop computer to locate some additional ground truth crop fields in Cass county, North Dakota. NASS also continues to put out remote sensing based vegetative index maps on its Web site from April until October from a polar orbiting weather satellite. For the 1999 crop season, the vegetative index map for the period July 16- July 29 clearly shows the extent of the Mid-Atlantic drought during this summer. Also the numerous 1997 Census of Agriculture Atlas maps and the crop county estimate theme maps available on the NASS Web site are created with GIS software.

NASS increased its communications capabilities by upgrading the data circuits used on the NASS Wide Area Network and transitioned from the AT&T FTS2000 network to MCI/Worldcom FTS2001. All but one of the 51 circuits are completed. The NASS Communications Team is using CiscoWorks 2000 for managing NASS' Cisco routers. Functionality includes configuration management, traffic analysis, and performance management capabilities on a device- and network-wide basis. Additionally, it provides tools that monitor availability and response time to assist in troubleshooting as well as access list management. Finally, a test network was successfully installed to test the viability of video-conferencing. Results were favorable. Further tests will be run in the future on the current FTS 2001 production network to ensure the progress of implementing a video-conferencing system on the NASS WAN.

NASS upgraded all HQ and field LAN servers to Netware 5.0. The Information Technology (IT) staff continues to emphasize standards of operations across locations and platforms to minimize support issues while optimizing performance of hardware and software solutions. NASS implemented a Storage Area Network solution for its Headquarters operations in Washington D.C. This sharing of data storage has allowed for a consolidation of file servers which has improved performance for the users and resulted in increased flexibility and manageability of the hardware solution for the IT staff.

NASS successfully implemented Windows95 running on an Intel Pentium class Workstation for all of its employees. Additionally, a complete suite of 32-bit office automation software was implemented. NASS ITD development efforts are continually upgrading to the most recent software versions. This includes moving to 32 bit platforms for all packages where available and upgrades are viable.

NASS established NASSNET, an Intranet communications system, to improve internal communications among all NASS work sites. NASSNET provides ready access to all administrative source documents and links to Administrative and Financial Management (AFM) policies and procedures.

All USDA and OMB Y2K compliance milestones for system renovations were met. NASS had all mission critical systems in compliance in according to OMB guidance, with the exception of the census of agriculture processing system which will not be in use until 2002 when the next 5-year census is conducted. All renovated mission critical systems were implemented by February 1999 and all replacement systems, with the exception of the census of agriculture system, were implemented by April 1999. To date, NASS has proceeded into the Year 2000 with no significant problems apparent in any mission critical systems.

**Current Fiscal Year Performance:** To make further improvements and enhancements in the organization, such as employee's work environment, an internal Organizational Climate Survey Evaluation Team was chartered by NASS management to analyze the results of the 1999 Organizational Climate survey and make comparisons, if possible, and assess the Agency's goals and priorities, and made recommendations to NASS Senior Management. The Team is also articulating the NASS Core Value System and providing recommendations consistent with those values that will be important to everyone in making NASS a great place to work.

Computer equipment and software, including training, is continuously being procured and implemented, as needed, to meet the demands and needs of the Agency.

The Data Warehouse group was reorganized into Section and provided additional staffing resources in the 1999 NASS Headquarters Reorganization. Data warehouse data sources continued to grow throughout the year. There are now over 600 million data points being tracked from 1997 to the present. Integration efforts to make use of this historical data in NASS' on-going programs continued. NASS continued consulting efforts with other Government Agencies, and are working with the Peoples Republic of China to help them with their Data Warehousing efforts.

**Program Evaluations:** None were conducted in FY 1999.

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE DISCONTINUED PERFORMANCE MEASURES

**Goal 2:** Ensure an adequate food and fiber supply and promote food safety through improved detection, surveillance, prevention, and education.

**Objective 2.2:** Provide important data on pre- and post- harvest chemical applications for informed evaluations of risk potential associated with using or discontinuing chemicals relative to both food safety and food security.

### Discontinued Performance Measure

Provide important data on pre- and post-harvest chemical applications for informed evaluations of risk potential associated with using or discontinuing chemicals relative to both food safety and food security.  
Percent of agricultural leaders surveyed who rate NASS chemical use data as important or essential to analysis and risk assessment.

**Explanation:** NASS will conduct a formal customer service survey in FY 2000. Data user ratings for customer service indicators being discontinued in Goals 2, 4, 5 and MI 1 will be consolidated into the customer service performance measures Goal 1 and MI 1 in order to simplify and streamline the reporting and level of service the Agency provides to its customers.

**Goal 4:** Enhance the quality of the environment through a better understanding of and building on agriculture's and forestry's complex links with soil, water, air, and biotic resources.

**Objective 4.1:** Provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, production practices, land productivity and Integrated Pest Management practices so proper decisions can be made regarding stewardship of America's rural resources and the environment.

### Discontinued Performance Measure

Provide statistical data on agricultural chemical use, production practices, land use, and Integrated Pest Management practices so proper decisions can be made regarding stewardship of America's rural resources and the environment.  
Percent of data users working on agriculture and the environment who are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality and coverage of NASS environmental information.

**Explanation:** Refer to explanation for discontinued performance measures in Goal 2.

**Goal 5:** Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address the economic and social problems facing our youth, families, and communities.

**Objective 5.1:** Provide detailed data from the census of agriculture at specified intervals to facilitate locality based policy and business decisions benefitting farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.

**Discontinued Performance Measure**

Provide detailed data from the census of agriculture at specified intervals to facilitate locality based policy and business decisions benefitting farmers, ranchers, and rural residents. Provide necessary and sufficient economic data on prices, labor, cost of production, farm numbers, and farm income to enable informed policy decisions to benefit farmers, ranchers, and rural residents.

Percent of stakeholders who rate NASS census and economic data as important to their work.

**Explanation:** Refer to explanation for discontinued performance measures in Goal 2.

**Management Initiative 1:** Strive to meet customer needs and expectations.

**Discontinued Performance Measure**

Improve customer awareness, responsiveness, service, and communications within NASS to enhance the data products and services delivered to satisfy changing customer data needs and expectations.

Percentage of the time NASS responds to customer requests for information within 2 working days.

**Explanation:** It is NASS policy that customer requests for information is appropriately handled within 2 working days. The tracking system was discontinued in 1999 because of the amount of NASS resources required to maintain the tracking system and the level of accuracy.

**Management Initiative 2:** Employ a diversified and technically competent staff and treat employees fairly and with respect.

**Discontinued Performance Measure**

Hire, train, and develop a highly qualified, diversified, and technically competent staff in an atmosphere of trust, teamwork, and in a healthy, comfortable, modern, and safe environment.

Percentage of NASS managers who have had 80 hours or more of management/leadership training.

**Explanation:** NASS training policy requires that all statisticians and computer specialists have at least 80 of management / leadership training. Therefore, it is highly likely that all new NASS supervisors and managers have received this training and this performance measure is of little value. NASS is currently reviewing the possibility of having all NASS supervisors and managers take the USDA Graduate School's Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI). A gap analysis and data generated from the LEI should provide additional information for preparing new performance measures for managers as well as the Agency.

**Management Initiative 3:** Ensure an effective information resource management system that maximizes productive capability and facilitates communication for employees.

**Discontinued Performance Measure**

Effectively manage an information resources management system that uses the latest technology to maximize productive capability and facilitate communication for efficient delivery of NASS services to the public.

Percentage of NASS managers giving a favorable rating to information and administrative systems.

**Explanation:** This information was not collected in the 1999 NASS Organizational Climate Survey. This measure should be re-evaluated and possibly be gathered from all employees instead of supervisors and managers only.